The Elementary Teacher and the Instructional Materials Coordinator Plan Together for Media Integration With Classroom Teaching and Learning

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An instructional materials program is an integral part of a quality educational program. The educational goal of our free society is to provide a quality education for every citizen and an optimum education for each citizen so that all citizens will be functionally literate. In our complex society, to be functionally literate means more than being able to read and to write. It means being able to read, to write, to think, and to act with competence. To think and to act with competence means being capable of translating knowledge into constructive action and rational behavior. It also means being capable of solving the problems encountered today and being capable of solving adequately the problems to be encountered in the future. To develop such competence is the purpose and the goal of education in our democracy. To reach this goal necessitates the availability of knowledge-building and knowledge-extending materials and a planned program for media-usage.

A quality, optimum educational program designed to develop functional literacy requires that learning go beyond the limitations of the textbook and the confines of the classroom. An optimum education requires that learning be individualized. A textbook can generalize, but it can not individualize teaching nor can it individualize learning. Knowledge-building media must be provided to meet the individual student's needs, interests, goals, and abilities. An instructional materials program is recognized today as the logically, economically, and educationally effective and efficient means of providing the materials, the services, and the guidance necessary for the full development and the optimum realization of a quality educational program designed to develop functional literacy.

A materials program of the scope necessary for the implementation of a quality educational program would not be possible in the North Hills schools if the administration had not established a district materials center. Building libraries have not been established in seven of the ten elementary schools because of the limitations of space. This suburban community adjacent to the city of Pittsburgh has experienced a phenomenal pupil population explosion. The pupil enrollment has doubled in the past ten years and increased by

one-third in the past two years with a current enrollment figure of 6,270. A continuous building program which has added a total of 128 new classrooms, with an additional twenty-one rooms currently under construction, has not been able to provide adequate space to accommodate the ever increasing numbers of children. A projected building program for the period 1964 through 1970 will provide two new elementary libraries every year until a total of ten has been established. Unwilling to have the present student body deprived of sufficient quality and quantity of knowledge-building and knowledge-extending materials because of lack of libraries within the buildings, North Hills has developed an instructional materials program to provide a wealth of materials in each building as well as an organized and unified media collection in the district center. The district center, which is located in the administration building, has been organized and has been administered in accordance with the plan recommended in the American Library Association's Standards for School Library Programs.[1] The coordinator ". . . serves as the director of the collections in the center and of the services relating to materials that are carried on within and from the center."[2] The coordinator serves as consultant for curriculum directors and provides specialized advisory and consultant services about printed and audio-visual materials to the teachers and school librarians. The district center's materials collection includes 6,270 books, 1,540 filmstrips, 395 recordings, 1,500 art and study prints, 900 slides, and an extensive pamphlet collection. The center provides an equipment and machine pool as a reserve when teachers or schools need additional machines. The equipment includes filmstrip projectors and viewers, slide projectors and viewers, phonographs with listening post and earphone attachments, overhead projectors, projection stands and screens, and a Polaroid Electric Eye camera. The center also has a laboratory complete with photo-copy machine, proto-printer, and laminator for making transparencies.

Teacher knowledge of the materials and services available in the district center is provided by a series of printed and personal contacts. Distributed to each teacher is a printed cross media index which lists under 878 unit and topic headings, a total of 6,313 media references. This cumulative index is revised biannually and is kept up to date with an annual supplement. Also, district and building workshops are used to orient teachers to new materials, new machines, and additional services. News bulletins are released from time to time alerting the faculty to acquisitions of general interest. Direct contact with individual teachers is made when new materials pertinent to his subject or personal interest are received in the center.

It is not the availability of materials, however, that gives validity to the claim that an instructional materials program is essential for the implementation of a quality educational program. Filmstrips, slides, recordings, study prints, and transparencies are not

educationally significant until their use is integrated and synchronized with classroom teaching and learning. It is the planned and scientific use of media that releases the knowledge-building and the knowledge-extending power latent in materials. Instructional materials become teaching resources and learning resources only when they vitalize teaching and expedite learning. It is the chief responsibility of the coordinator to see that the materials necessary for meeting curricular needs and individual pupil needs are available and their use integrated and synchronized with classroom instruction.

The integration of instructional media with classroom teaching requires application by the coordinator and the teacher of the technology of programming. Programming is the science of structuring a systematic and comprehensive plan for the use of media to meet the teaching goals and the learning needs of any portion or area of the educational program. Together the teacher and the coordinator program for the use of knowledge-building media. Cooperatively they define the goals to be reached, the concepts to be developed, the needs to be met, the interests to be fostered, the avenues to be explored—the total teaching plan to be implemented. Cooperatively they structure the pattern for media-usage by spelling out in logical, progressive, sequential order when, where, how and what material is to be used. Cooperatively they determine the program for building, extending, reinforcing, unifying, and integrating knowledge by structuring a planned multi-media approach to teaching and to learning.

Programming for the use of instructional materials is of vital significance in the elementary grades. Since these are the formative years, they are indeed the critical years. These are the years when the foundation for functional literacy is laid. The educational experiences of a child during these formative years determine in large measure the child's mental and emotional attitude toward learning itself. If these experiences are positive, they can foster a zest for learning and for achieving. Therefore, it is imperative that materials which will facilitate learning and which will create the desire to learn be provided. Identifying, obtaining, and organizing these materials are the responsibility of the coordinator; the planned and scientific use of the materials is the joint responsibility of the coordinator and the classroom teacher.

Teacher-coordinator planning occurs in a variety of ways and extends from the relatively simple request for several pieces of material to meet a single topic need to a request for multiple teaching resources to facilitate the introduction, the development, and the culmination of a unit. The planning sessions range from a meeting of the coordinator with one teacher to a series of meetings held throughout the school year with an entire faculty engaged in a curriculum study.

Examples of planning sessions and the resulting patterns of media-usage are given here as a means of demonstrating procedure, scope, and value of programming for media integration with classroom teaching.

A typical request for materials to meet a specific teaching need was the basis of a recent conference with a first grade teacher. The teacher had told her children the story of The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss[3] and found that they were intrigued with "Little Thing One" and "Little Thing Two," and she was anxious to discover if there were similar stories that could be used in teaching the children to count. She selected three from the group of books provided for her examination. She felt that all three would be excellent for developing the children's ability to listen and to interpret, as well as to count. She decided that the Counting Carnival by Feenie Ziner and Paul Galdone[4] would be presented first, not only because it was simple in plot and style, but also because it would give the children number sequence from one to twelve. The book she decided to present next was The Goat that Learned to Count by Alf Prøysen,[5] for she saw in this story not only a device to teach children to count to fifteen but a dramatic means of having them see the necessity of being able to determine just how many passengers there were on a boat that would surely sink if more than fifteen got on board. The third book, Mystery of the Farmer's Three Fives by Margaret Friskey[6] was selected, first because it was an hilariously funny story sure to appeal to first graders, and second because it would give a new dimension to counting to fifteen, for this story demonstrates that fifteen can be a combination of numbers such as three times five. This planning session, which lasted only thirty minutes, acquainted the teacher with materials which she would use to develop the children's ability to listen, to interpret, and to count, and at the same time gave the children a series of learning experiences which would convince them that learning can be fun.

The same day that the first grade teacher planned for materials to facilitate the teaching of arithmetic, a student teacher came to the center to plan a science unit on conservation. She explained that the unit on conservation as presented in the textbook lacked pupil appeal, and continued by saying, "My greatest need is for materials to create and sustain interest throughout the five weeks we are to spend on this unit." The coordinator, recalling a particularly successful conservation unit that had been taught the year before, told the student of the possibility of using membership in the Junior Forest Rangers Association as a motivating device. When the student teacher saw the book, The True Story of Smokey the Bear by Jane Werner Watson,[7] she immediately saw the possibilities of using this story as unit motivation, for this story dynamically portrays for the children the devastation that results when a forest fire occurs, gives the safety rules to be followed by friends of Smokey the Fire Prevention Bear, and invites all to become members of the Junior Forest Rangers.

The coordinator showed the student teacher a copy of the conservation pledge and conservation song sheet available upon request from the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture[8] and also told her that the same department would send a series of fifteen transcriptions which feature Smokey the Bear discussing conservation with outstanding television stars such as Danny Thomas, Richard Boone, Tennessee Ernie Ford, and Jack Benny. The student teacher next listened to a recording of Gene Autry singing, "Smokey the Bear"[9] and decided to borrow the recording so she could learn the song which would be the theme song for her unit. This planning session oriented the student teacher to materials to satisfy her motivational needs, and also demonstrated for her the value accruing from teacher-coordinator planning.

A fourth grade teacher who was planning a unit on Japan asked if there were materials available for teaching her class the Japanese art of paper folding. Since her children were delighted with any type of craft work, she thought that origami would offer an excellent opportunity to integrate a craft activity with social studies. Fortunately several new books on the Japanese art of paper folding had been added to the collection the past summer, and the teacher found each one easy enough to be used with her nine year old youngsters. When she examined the Origami Storybook by Florence Sakade,[10] she was fascinated by the simplicity of the directions for paper folding designs and was delighted at the integration of storytelling, interpreting Japanese manners and customs, and craft work. She thought that the book, Paper Dolls of Old Japan by Taeko Yamanashi[11] with its accompanying paper doll making kit, was a real find. Likewise the exquisitely beautiful Dolls of Japan by Satako Ozawa[12] encouraged her to anticipate interest on the part of the children in making eggshell dolls and then dressing them in authentic costumes. She borrowed the book so that she could experiment at home and test the directions before the children started asking her, "How do you do it?" This teacher's visit to the center provided her with new materials, new ideas, and new methods which would give greater scope to the teaching activities and greater breadth to the learning activities in a study of Japan.

An experiment in the teaching of reading being conducted in one of the seventeen first grades has required careful and detailed planning by the elementary curriculum director, the teacher, and the coordinator and will require joint planning throughout the school year. This experiment in personalized reading will test the practicality, the advantages, the disadvantages, and the feasibility of teaching reading from library materials rather than from a textbook. At the inception of the program, the teacher briefed the coordinator on the philosophy, the techniques, the material needs, and the overall plan for the program. At this briefing session a tentative pattern of media-usage was developed and a sequence schedule for introducing printed materials, filmstrips, and recordings was determined. It was agreed by

teacher and coordinator that the materials schedule was tentative and that pupil interest, reaction, and progress would ultimately determine what material would be used and in what sequence it would be introduced. An initial collection of two hundred titles was selected and sent to the classroom for an undesignated period of time. The materials collection must be fluid and sufficiently plastic to mold to the individual child's interests, needs, and abilities. A program of such scope will require constant communication among teacher, curriculum director, and materials coordinator. Likewise, it will necessitate the coordinator's participating in classroom use and discussion of materials so that pupil reaction, pupil interest, and need can be judged and materials best suited to meet individual needs can be selected and made available.

Another curriculum development requiring comprehensive materials is a media pilot study being conducted during the current school year by the faculty of the Seville Elementary School. The purpose of the pilot study is to have materials tested, evaluated, and their educational significance determined through teacher observation of pupil use and reaction. On the basis of his own observation, each teacher will recommend for program inclusion those materials which the pilot study reveals as meeting specific pupil needs and specific curriculum needs and will indicate the pattern for the most dynamic use of materials. The teachers will advise on the timeliness of presentation: when in the learning process a piece of material is most effective, in what unit and where in that unit it offers impetus to learning. The educational value of this testing program lies in the availability of materials when those materials are timely, suitable, and appropriate to topic and unit exploration and development. This requires that coordinators be alerted to teaching goals and plans for not only current units but those to be introduced in the future. Constant communication between pilot study teachers and the center makes possible the availability of a wealth of materials in anticipation of class and pupil use. A sixth grade unit on Mexico has just been tested by teacher and pupils. It included 53 books, 43 filmstrips, 193 study prints, 15 recordings, 4 puppets, 8 musical instruments, a chocolate mixer, a gourd bowl, pottery figures and jugs, a serape, a sombrero, huaraches, straw angels, stamps, and money. This wealth of instructional materials is an example of the unusual breadth necessary if adequacy of understanding is to be developed. The pilot study provides the materials for testing and evaluating in one school. The resultant recommended pattern of media-usage will extend this adequacy of understanding to all district schools.

Programming for the integrated and synchronized use of materials by teacher and coordinator provides resources which will widen, deepen, intensify, and individualize learning. "The extent to which many children and young people of today will be creative, informed, knowledgeable, and within their own years, wise, will be shaped by the boundaries of the content of the library resources available within

their schools"[13]--boundaries limited only by the wisdom and will-to-work of teachers and coordinators who realize the importance of structuring a scientific pattern for media-usage.

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